

**SENATE—Tuesday, September 26, 2000***(Legislative day of Friday, September 22, 2000)*

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. on the expiration of the recess, and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

**PRAYER**

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, we accept this new day as Your gracious gift. We enter into its challenges and opportunities with eagerness. We commit our way to You, put our trust in You, and know that You will bring to pass what is best for us and our Nation as we are obedient to Your guidance. We rest in You, Lord, and wait patiently for You to show us the way.

Bless the Senators today with a special measure of Your wisdom, knowledge, and discernment. Your wisdom is greater than our understanding, Your knowledge goes way beyond our comprehension of the facts, and Your discernment gives x-ray penetration to Your plan for America. Thank You for Your Commandments that keep us rooted in what's morally right, Your justice that guides our thinking, and Your righteousness that falls as a plumb line on all that we do and say.

Father, we pray for the reversal of the spiritual and moral drift of our Nation away from You. May the people of our land be able to look to the women and men of this Senate as they exemplify righteousness, repentance, and rectitude. May these leaders and all of us who work as part of the Senate family confess our own need for Your forgiveness and reconciliation. Then help us to be courageous in calling for a great spiritual awakening in America beginning with us. You are our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Honorable GEORGE V. VOINOVICH, a Senator from the State of Ohio, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

**RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able acting majority leader is recognized.

**SCHEDULE**

Mr. VOINOVICH. Today the Senate will begin 45 minutes of debate on the H-1B visa bill, with a cloture vote on amendment No. 4178 scheduled to occur at 10:15. As a reminder, Senators have until 10:15 a.m. to file second-degree amendments at the desk. If cloture is invoked, the Senate will continue debate on the amendment. If cloture is not invoked, the Senate is expected to resume debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2557, the National Energy Security Act of 2000. Also this week, the Senate is expected to take up any appropriations conference reports available for action.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

**AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ACT OF 2000**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the bill.

The clerk will report the bill.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2045) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act with respect to H-1B nonimmigrant aliens.

Pending:

Lott (for Abraham) amendment No. 4177, in the nature of a substitute.

Lott amendment No. 4178 (to amendment No. 4177), of a perfecting nature.

Lott motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on the Judiciary, with instructions to report back forthwith.

Lott amendment No. 4179 (to the motion to recommit), of a perfecting nature.

Lott amendment No. 4180 (to amendment No. 4179), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. With the understanding of the acting majority leader, if I could have the attention of the Senator from Ohio, I ask that the time be evenly divided.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is already the order.

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask consent I be allowed to yield myself 12 minutes, and I ask consent that the Senator from Rhode Island be allowed to follow with 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has just allocated more time than the Senator has.

Mr. KENNEDY. As I understand the time allocation, there are 45 minutes. I thought I would yield 12 minutes to myself and 10 minutes to the Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Twenty-two minutes a side.

Mr. KENNEDY. I ask consent that the Senator from Rhode Island be permitted to be recognized after me in the remaining time, and I yield myself 12 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield myself 10 minutes at this time, if the clerk will let me know.

Mr. President, I support the pending H-1B high-tech visa legislation. The high technology industry needs skilled workers to ensure its continued growth. As we all know, the Nation is stretched thin to support these firms that are so important to the Nation's continuing economic growth. Demand for employees with training in computer science, electrical engineering, software and communications is very high, and Congress has a responsibility to meet these needs.

In 1998, in an effort to find a stop-gap solution to this labor shortage, we enacted legislation which increased the number of temporary visas available to skilled foreign workers. Despite the availability of additional visas, we have reached the cap before the end of the year in the last 2 fiscal years.

The legislation before us today addresses this problem in two ways. The short-term solution is to raise the H-1B visa cap and admit greater numbers of foreign workers to fill these jobs. The long-term solution is to do more to provide skills training for American workers and educational opportunities for American students.

Raising the cap for foreign workers without addressing our domestic job training needs would be a serious mistake. We cannot and should not count on foreign sources of labor indefinitely. It is unfair to U.S. workers, and the supply of foreign workers is limited. In their 1999 book, *The Supply of Information Technology Workers in the United States*, Peter Freeman and William Aspray report that other countries are experiencing their own IT labor shortages and are "placing pressures on or providing incentives to their indigenous IT work force to stay at home or return home."

Furthermore, the jobs currently being filled by H-1B workers are solid,